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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Poti/Port Facilities and Requirements/Water Depth

PLACE ACQUIRED --
(BY SOURCE)

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US merchant ship master, presumably reliable.

SOURCE

He found the following information in his own ship's voyage reports prepared for future use of other merchant ship masters. He believes the information is quite accurate as of the date indicated /March 1942/. The Navy's interviewing officer rates the information as probably true.

/The Office of Naval Intelligence furnished the following information to CIA for IAC dissemination in accordance with paragraph 3(c), NSCID 7. (DIO-11ND Conf report No 371-54.)/

1. Entrance Instructions: The approach to Poti is best from the West/Northwest on a course 117° true. The range will take the vessel to the end of the breakwater. A northerly set must be guarded against, as it may set the vessel on a shoal. There are no mine fields outside of Poti. Pilotage is compulsory, and the pilot will meet the vessel about 1 1/2 miles outside the breakwater.
2. Documents Required: The following documents are required: Bills of Health, Ship's Register, Ship's Articles, Manifest of Cargo, and Crew List. The ship's agent makes up a set of Crew Lists in Russian.
3. Agents: The ship's agents were "Inflot". They were of very little help except as interpreters. They speak very little English.
4. Security Procedure: About the same procedure that is used today in Russian ports was enforced. A two to three-hour search was conducted prior to entering and leaving port.
5. Manganese Dock: The Manganese Dock has only 23 feet of water alongside. It is customary to load to 23 feet and then to breast the vessel off the dock about 15 feet to complete loading. Maximum draft at Poti is 25 feet, and then the vessel was in the mud most of the time.
6. Cargo Handling: Ore is loaded with cranes at a rate of about 150-200 tons per hour around the clock. The ship's crew must take off and replace the hatches and strong backs both on deck and between decks. There was no pilferage.
7. Tugs: There are two medium-sized tugs at Poti.
8. Repairs: Small repairs may be made if absolutely necessary.
9. Supplies: Fresh water is piped to the wharves and is plentiful. No other supplies are available.

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10. Passage Through Dardanelles and Bosphorus:

- a. Pilots: Pilotage is not compulsory but is advisable due to the currents and frequent low visibility. The signal for the pilot is two long and one short blast on the whistle. He may be called day or night.
- b. Black Sea Pilot: The Black Sea Pilot was of little assistance and was often erroneous. As an example, the book states that vessels in the Dardanelles and Bosphorus must proceed at slow speeds, while actually all ships proceed at full speed.
- c. Navigational Aids: The aids to navigation at both entrances are good, if the visibility is good. In the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, navigational aids are poor and unreliable.
- d. Quarantine Procedure: Vessels bound from the Aegean Sea to the Black Sea must stop at Chanak, in the Dardanelles, for quarantine. Vessels bound from the Black Sea must stop at Buyudere. The doctors seldom board the vessel. Usually the Ship's Register, Crew List, and Bills of Health are taken down to the doctor's boat.

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